

CASNS COVID-19 WORKPLACE RISK ASSESSMENT

Version	Date	Status	Owner
1.0	15 th May 2020	First draft	Simon Harris
1.1	18 th May 2020	Draft updated with MT comments	Simon Harris
1.2	22 nd May 2020	Draft for publication post consultation	Simon Harris



CASNS: COVID-19 Risk Assessment

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope & Purpose

This risk assessment covers all paid staff and volunteers working for or with CASNS and applies to all premises and activities.

Its purpose is to provide a framework within which we can manage the risks presented by COVID-19 to ensure as far as possible we maintain a safe and healthy working environment for staff, volunteers and clients.

This Risk Assessment and the measures within it will apply for as long as the COVID-19 restrictions apply and will not cease to be relevant until they are all lifted.

It will be reviewed monthly and updated as the situation, threat level and national guidance changes.

It has been drafted with reference to government guidance on minimising the risks of COVID-19, especially “Working safely during COVID-19 in offices and contact centres” (published by BEIS in May 2020). We have also quoted other guidance on social distancing, shielding those who are clinically vulnerable and extremely clinically vulnerable as well as using public transport.

1.2 Principal Risk

Unlike most risk registers that deal with a wide range of risks this assessment focuses on one principal risk: the risk of staff contracting COVID-19 whilst at work and all the prevention, control and mitigation measures outlined below are designed to minimise this risk.

Measures to control other, non-COVID-19 related risks are contained in other documents, for example the organisational risk register, which is part of the Business and Development Plan. Organisational risks arising from COVID-19 are summarised in the Budget forecast for 2020/21, which is also within the finance and funding strategy of the Business and Development Plan.

1.3 Subsidiary risks

This document acknowledges that there are subsidiary risks arising from COVID-19 and the measures we put in place and outlines the steps we will take to try and minimise them or support staff to minimise them, as some are outside our control, but fall within the broader remit of promoting staff wellbeing.

These include:

- Risks associated with working from home;
- Impact of isolation on staff wellbeing;

- Staff at risk of domestic abuse or violence;
- Staff at risk of contracting COVID-19 whilst travelling to or from the workplace.

1.4 Principles

The following principles underpin our approach to managing the risks presented by COVID-19:

- The safety and welfare of staff, volunteers and clients is our main priority;
- Where possible staff will continue to work remotely for as much of the time as possible;
- Where staff need to work within CASNS' premises arrangements will be in place to minimise risk by implementing appropriate preventative measures (outlined at 3 below);
- Where feasible social distancing will be maintained, where it is impossible, contact will be limited as far as possible in terms of the duration of contact;
- Good personal hygiene will be promoted with suitable signage and making available handwashing facilities and sanitiser dispensers;
- Changes to normal working practices will be made in consultation with individual staff affected and the recognised Union where changes affect all staff;
- Staff are expected to acknowledge the reciprocal responsibilities that underpin all Health and Safety arrangements by following all organisational H&S requirements, policies and procedures; by not indulging in risky behaviour at or outside of work and not knowingly putting colleagues at risk of infection.

2. Background to risk assessment

2.1. Risk groups¹

Description	Level of risk of severe illness as compared to the general population	Risk mitigation the employer is advised to put in place
Those under 70, who may have underlying health conditions, but based on our occupational health assessment do not have conditions defined in government guidance that would place them in the more vulnerable group if they were to contract COVID-19.	STANDARD (GREEN)	Social distancing – the standard risk mitigation advised by the government for the population.
Those considered to be more vulnerable to serious illness if they contract COVID-19. These are people over 70, or those under 70 who have an underlying health condition as listed by the government that places them in the more vulnerable group, or who are more than 28 weeks pregnant.	INCREASED (YELLOW)	Social distancing, stringently applied (the way this is done being specific to each workplace).
There will be some people the occupational health professional making the assessment considers highly vulnerable . These may be those more severely affected by one of the conditions the government advises makes that person more vulnerable, or those who have a combination of conditions that further increases their vulnerability (co-morbidity).	HIGH (AMBER)	Social distancing stringently applied. We may provide further advice on a case by case basis as needed.
Those considered to be extremely vulnerable . Examples are those being treated for cancer with chemotherapy or radiotherapy, and people with severe asthma (needing hospital admissions or courses of steroid tablets).	VERY HIGH (RED)	Shielding for 12 weeks, or longer period as advised by government.

2.2. Situational Risks

If any of the following situations apply to staff members or volunteers they will be expected to follow the current public health guidance. This information is taken from national guidance contained on the NHS and Gov.UK websites.

Situation	Response/ Mitigation
You are displaying symptoms of COVID-19	You will self-isolate for 7 days and not attend work. If you can work remotely and are well enough to do so, then you will be treated as working. If you are unable to work remotely or are too ill to work you will be treated as unfit for work for that period. You will supply us with either a fit note or a self-isolation note as appropriate
Someone in your household is displaying symptoms of COVID-19, but you are well	You will self-isolate for 14 days and not attend work. If you are able to work remotely then do so and you will be treated as at work. If you are

¹ 'Returning to the workplace after COVID-19 lockdown: a toolkit' - the Society of Occupational Medicine 2020

	unable to do so you will be treated as unfit for work. You will supply us with a self-isolation note ²
You are classed as clinically extremely clinically vulnerable ³	You are at HIGH risk from COVID-19 and will have been advised to shield. You will not be able to attend work and will only be able to work from home.
You are classed as clinically vulnerable (aged over 70 or under 70 and pregnant or suffering from certain conditions ⁴)	You are at MODERATE risk from COVID-19. You will have been advised to minimise contact with other people and therefore should work from home if at all possible.
If you live with someone who is, extremely clinically vulnerable	You should follow the national guidance. This should not stop you working from home. If you cannot work from home you will be offered Special Leave of Absence.

2.3 Summary and risk map

Index	Risk	Impact	Likelihood before C.M.	Control Measures
1.	Transmission of COVID-19 while staff are working within CASNS buildings	High	High	a). Working from home (3.1 below) b). Social distancing (see 3.2 below) c). Hygiene (see 3.3 below) d). Receiving deliveries (see 3.4 below)
2.	Isolation of working at home is detrimental to staff wellbeing	High	Medium	See 4.2 below
3.	Home working environment is unsafe (e.g. too many hazards)	Medium	Medium	See 4.1 below
4.	Prolonged time at home with partner increases risk of domestic abuse	Low	High	See 4.3 below

² See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

³ See: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

⁴ Chronic Asthma, COPD, emphysema or bronchitis; heart disease, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, liver disease (e.g. hepatitis), Parkinson's, motor neurone disease, MS, cerebral palsy, are at high risk of infections, have a suppressed immune system, are very obese (BMI of 40 or over); or invited for a flu jab each year.

5.	Staff travelling to work by public transport become infected	Medium	High	See 4.4 below
----	--	--------	------	---------------

3. Control Measures

3.1 Working from home

This is a primary measure for managing risk of transmission. Where staff can work from home they will do so, ideally this will be all of the time or, where this is not possible or not desirable, on a rota to work in an office (see below);

We anticipate that the majority of staff currently working from home will continue to do so.

3.2 Social Distancing

This is a primary measure for managing risks of transmission and will therefore underpin many of the measures in place.

- The 2 metre rule will be observed where possible;
- Where this is unavoidable, proximity of less than 2m must be for less than 15 minutes and for as short a time as possible or staff can wear a face covering;
- This will apply to work stations, corridors, communal areas, entrances and exits, meetings and travel within work time

3.2.1 Work stations

- Work stations will be kept two metres apart wherever possible;
- In offices where work stations are currently less than 2m apart, the workstations to be occupied simultaneously will be separated by vacant workstations to create a 2m separation. This may involve rotaing staff to attend on different days and require a mix of home and office based working;
- Workstations will not be shared unless this is unavoidable, in such cases they will need to be cleaned before and after use by the staff member using them;
- Consider working in an interview room;
- Where necessary we will provide screening to facilitate social distancing between work stations and between workstations and thoroughfares.

3.2.2 Zoning the buildings

- To facilitate social distancing we will be zoning Advice House and the Newcastle premises (in advance of any reopening of them) – see below – but due to the layout and facilities we will not be zoning Biddulph or Canal Arm.
- The Zones at Advice House initially will be:
 - Zone 1: The 1st and 2nd Floors of the extension;
 - Zone 2: The Upstairs of the main building (specialist and equalities teams & finance office);
 - Zone 3: Downstairs in the main building;
 - Zone 4: Ground floor of the extension.
- The Zones at Newcastle will be:
 - Zone 1: The Garden Street half of the building
 - Zone 2: The Well Street half of the building
 - These have not been allocated to teams yet as the premises are currently not in use. If they are brought back into use we will allocate teams/staff to zones;
- Zones will be allocated to particular teams (see below);
- You should stay in your zone and only venture into another zone in exceptional circumstances (e.g. an emergency evacuation – see below);
- Zones will include, office spaces, kitchens, corridors and toilets that will be for the exclusive use of staff allocated to the zone;
- Where possible zones will have a separate entrance/exit to the building. This will not be possible in every building and so some entrances/exits will be shared;
- In the event of an emergency evacuation (e.g. fire alarm) zoning will not apply and the normal evacuation procedure will apply;

Advice House:

Zone	Toilets	Kitchen	Entrance/Exit	Smoking Area	Teams
1	Top Floor toilet by training room	Staff room or SVG refreshment point	External door on ground floor of extension	SVG balcony or the rear courtyard	SVG, IT Support, Maintenance
2	Middle floor	Refreshment stations in RAST & specialist offices	Main staff entrance	Rear courtyard	Spec & Equalities and Finance
3	Main downstairs	Downstairs kitchen	Main staff entrance	Smoking area by kitchen	Debt & PMW

4	Main downstairs	refreshment station tba	External door on G/F of extension	Rear courtyard	No one yet
---	-----------------	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	----------------	------------

- **Smoking** – anyone wishing to smoke or vape will use the smoking area designated above, observing social distancing while doing so. We will impose a limit on the number of people who can be accommodated within those areas at any one time to ensure social distancing guidelines are followed. Smokers must not linger in downstairs kitchen, must observe social distancing as they pass through and only use it as an access route if it is not the kitchen for their zone.

We aim to clean the balcony outside the SVG office so they can use that for smoking and once the training room balcony door is repaired we will reopen that to smokers, deciding closer to the time for which zones.

3.2.3 Entrances and exits

- Where feasible staff will use the entrance/exit allocated to their zone;
- When entering or leaving the building staff will use hand sanitiser that will be provided;
- When entering or leaving the building staff will leave a 2m distance between them and the person in front or behind them in the queue – this will be marked out where possible;
- When using an entrance or exit staff should avoid, where possible using the door handle, or if they have to (to undo a lock) cover their hands or sanitise them before and as soon as they can afterwards.

3.2.4 Corridors and staircases

- To facilitate social distancing you will pay extra attention to keeping 2 metres apart in corridors and on stair cases, avoiding passing where possible. It will not be feasible to make corridors one way but zoning should reduce the need for through traffic;
- Routes into and out of zones will be designed to comply with these requirements and to maximise social distancing;
- When using a corridor staff should keep a 2m distance between them and other people using the same corridor.

3.2.5 Toilets

- When using toilets, use the toilets allocated to your zone;
- Ensure you observe the 2m rule when using the toilet (cubicles probably provide sufficient screening to remove the need to be 2m apart);

- Be prepared to wait your turn, queuing at 2m intervals;
- Wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.

3.2.6 Kitchens and staff rooms

- Use the staff room in your zone;
- When using kitchens and staff rooms observe the 2 metre rule
- Use the same mug, plates and cutlery if you can and limit yourself to using one mug, plate and set of cutlery a day. If possible bring and use your own;
- Kettles and drinks making facilities will be available in zones;
- Use the kitchen nearest your zone to store perishables in the fridge and use microwaves;
- Where possible collect water for refreshment stations and milk at the start of the day and wash up at the end of the day. When using a kitchen in another zone for this observe social distancing;
- Bring a packed lunch where possible as there may not be many outlets open to buy lunch;
- If you have to buy lunch observe social distancing when so doing (see 3.2.3 for guidance);
- If going out to buy lunch with a colleague stay 2m apart.

3.2.7 Meetings (internal and external)

- Minimise meetings as far as possible;
- Where possible use video conferencing or telephone meetings (phone probably works best for one to one);
- When you need to hold a face to face meeting, use a room large enough to enable social distancing, e.g. the Advice House training room or waiting room and ensure any meetings in other organisations' premises are large enough to offer social distancing;
- If the weather is nice use the outdoor area at the back of the extension at Advice House, or the bench by the canal at Canal Arm;
- Meetings in the Advice House training room **must** be booked on the room booking system;
- Staff from outside zone 1 may pass along the landing and use the stairs to access the training room. They must not use the toilet or kitchen on the top floor (go before the meeting and take drinks with you, safely) and must avoid touching the door handles and handrail on

the stairs wherever possible or sanitise their hands before and after using the stairs;

- When organising a meeting in an indoor meeting area ensure that you do not invite more people than can safely self-isolate in the space available;
- Before and after using shared meeting area those attending the meeting must ensure that they wipe down all hard surfaces, such as table tops, chair legs and door handles that they have touched.

3.2.8 Fixed Teams

- To minimise the number of people you have contact with we will divide staff into fixed teams, where their team is big enough to do so. Small teams may be one fixed team;
- Staff working in Advice House for part of the time will ensure their days in the office are regular to support the use of fixed teams. A rota will be drawn up recording this and to enable us to manage numbers in the building at any one time;
- Fixed teams will work in the same office spaces at the same time and mixing with other fixed teams will be minimised.

3.2.9 Lifts

- Lifts will only be used by people who need to use them for health reasons or because of a disability;
- Only one person at a time in a lift, unless they have a carer from whom they are not required to socially distance, who may accompany them;
- Where a lift is required to move heavy items, put those items in and use the stairs (unless you need to use the lift for health or disability reasons).

3.2.10 Visitors and contractors

- Work related visitors will be minimised and remote methods used to communicate with them where possible (e.g. telephone calls or video conferencing);
- Where this is not possible and the visit is essential, social distancing will be observed as described elsewhere in this section;
- Where contractors need to visit (e.g. photocopier engineers) the teams affected must be informed in advance and social distancing will be observed by all staff working in the area of the copier being fixed and by all staff walking past;
- All reasonable health and safety measures required by the contractor will be observed.

3.2.11 Staggering start and finish times

If the numbers of people working from offices becomes sufficient to require it then we will arrange for staff start and finish times to be staggered to reduce congestion at entry and exit points.

3.3 Hygiene

Good hygiene habits are a primary measure for controlling the risk of transmission.

3.3.1 Hand washing

- Handwashing is a more effective method of maintaining good hygiene and staff must follow the well-established, national guidance on hand washing;
- Where that is not possible or practical then they should use the hand sanitisers provided around the buildings;
- Wash your hands for 2 minutes when you arrive at work, before and after eating, when returning to the building or if you have been out for any reason.

3.3.2 Hand sanitising

- Dispensers will continue to be available, but may be relocated to ensure they are in the best places;
- Sanitiser will be provided at photocopiers. Staff using photocopiers should sanitise their hands before and after using the copier;
- Staff must use hand sanitisers when they move from area to area and when entering or exiting the building.

3.3.3 Air conditioning

- It is unclear what role air conditioning systems play in the transmission of COVID-19 therefore for the time being minimise the use of air conditioning units to be on the safe side;
- Where additional ventilation or cooling is needed open windows and, if safe, external doors and try and create a through draft;
- Where this is inadequate use air conditioning units as sparingly as possible.

3.3.4 Cleaning

- Offices and common areas will be cleaned once a day, with special attention paid to door handles, bannisters and other frequently used hard surfaces;

- Staff will clean their workstations and equipment they use (principally their phone and keyboard, once a day using the wipes provided);
- Staff will be responsible for washing up the cups, plates and crockery that they use. If they are making drinks at a refreshment station rather than in a kitchen then this will be done at the end of the day.

3.3.5 Masks, gloves and PPE

Following the government's guidance on face coverings and PPE at work⁵:

- If you usually use PPE when doing your normal job you should continue to use it (e.g. using goggles and a face mask while carrying out maintenance tasks);
- If you are a first aider and use PPE when administering first aid then continue to do so (e.g. gloves);
- If you are working in a partner agency's premises and they require you to use PPE you must follow their instructions (even if you wouldn't normally wear it elsewhere). Before working with them clarify if they will provide it;
- If you do *not* normally use PPE, masks or gloves when working there is no need to do so now as you will not be working in an environment where the risk of transmission is regarded as high (e.g. within a clinical setting). This may change when we resume face to face advice;
- If you are unable to socially distance at work then you may wear a face covering and we will have a limited supply available for staff who do not have their own;
- If you are using a face covering you will:
 - Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting on or taking off a face covering;
 - Change your face covering if it becomes damp or you have touched it (avoid touching it);
 - Change and wash your covering daily;
 - Wash your hands regularly.

3.3.6 Coats and cloakrooms

- As we do not yet know how long the virus lives on soft surfaces, if you are hanging a coat up on coat hooks or stands use a separate hook (do not put your coat over another) to try and keep coats as separate as possible;

⁵ See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres>

- If you are using the downstairs cloakroom observe social distancing when hanging up and retrieving your coat;
- If there are no hooks available hang your coat on the back of your chair.

3.4 Receiving deliveries

- Deliveries will be made to the staff entrance at Advice House and at other designated collection points at other premises (tbc);
- Deliveries will be received by the Finance Officer or an Admin Officer in the FO's absence;
- Where appropriate gloves will be worn, social distancing observed and any inbound deliveries wiped before being unpacked or distributed.

3.5 Work related travel

- Where possible work related travel (e.g. to meetings, court hearings, outreach sessions, sessions with partner organisations) should be minimised and remote alternatives explored;
- If this is not possible, then staff should:
 - Avoid public transport where possible;
 - If public transport use is essential, then observe social distancing and general guidance on face coverings on public transport;
 - Avoid sharing private cars where possible;
 - If sharing a car is unavoidable then use appropriate face coverings and gloves, sanitise hands before and after the journey and keep the passengers to a minimum;
 - If you need face coverings for essential travel-related work this will be provided.

4. Subsidiary risks

These risks are classed as subsidiary because they are not risks directly associated with working from the office but nonetheless arise from our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and thus it is appropriate to include them in this document.

4.1 Risks of working from home

The principal physical risks of working at home that we have identified are summarised in the following table with appropriate mitigation and control measures alongside them:

Index	Risk	Control Measure
-------	------	-----------------

1.	The home work station is unsafe due to trip hazards	Ensure the area is free from trailing wires and other trip hazards
2.	Electrical equipment being used is safe	<p>If using CASNS equipment make sure it is newly acquired or has been PAT tested.</p> <p>If using own equipment make sure it is safe, installed and set up properly</p> <p>Make sure that electrical sockets are not overloaded</p>
3.	Work station furniture is adequate and you can work comfortably	<p>If using own furniture make sure it is set up correctly and comfortable</p> <p>If this is not possible arrange for a desk and/or chair to be supplied by CASNS</p> <p>Take regular breaks, stand up and walk about</p> <p>Report any repeated discomfort to your supervisor</p>
4.	You can use IT equipment comfortably	<p>If using own, make sure you can use it for prolonged periods</p> <p>Take regular breaks, especially from screens</p> <p>If your own equipment is unsuitable for prolonged use arrange for a keyboard and/or screen to be supplied by CASNS</p>
5.	Home work stations do not allow for confidential working	<p>Ensure phone calls can be made and received without being overheard</p> <p>Ensure you can work on screens without being overlooked</p> <p>If you have paper client records at home ensure they can be locked away securely in a cupboard or case/carrier</p> <p>If these are not possible talk to your supervisor or manager</p>
6.	IT equipment is insecure and vulnerable to malware or intrusion	<p>Follow the IT procedures in the OPPM, especially 14.4 Data Processing – guidance for individuals and 14.5 Data Security policy and procedure</p> <p>If using a CASNS laptop or PC follow</p>

		<p>the guidance in those procedures</p> <p>If using your own machine make sure that appropriate anti-virus software is installed, up to date and operational</p>
--	--	--

4.2 Risks from isolation

For all of us working from home for prolonged periods is a new experience and one that brings with it a range of new issues for staff and risks to their wellbeing. The following measures are available to support staff with their wellbeing and counter the effects of isolation:

- Access to the Health Assured Employee Assistance Package at: www.healthassuredeap.com
- Access to our wellbeing resources at: <https://challengenorthstaffs.org/useful-info/>
Or: bit.ly/info4CAB
- Access to CA's wellbeing resources at: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/digital-workplace/coronavirus-resources-for-our-service/staff-and-volunteer-wellbeing/>. This page includes links to a range of national/external resources too.
- Access to national advice on wellbeing at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19>
- Individual supervision with supervisors and managers.
- Individual welfare calls from supervisors and managers (If you are concerned ring your manager or supervisor if just for a chat).
- Ringing a colleague for a chat – if you are logged into your work phone you can use their extension number.
- Team meetings – these are increasingly being organised online and offer support and contact as well as an opportunity to discuss work issues.
- Team online social events – some teams are already organising social events via video conferencing platforms. Feel free to suggest one to your team, or even organise something – virtual quiz nights, virtual pub nights, the opportunities are limitless.
- For more serious psychological effects staff should access available mental health services via their GP or other access routes.

4.3 Risks to staff of domestic violence

One consequence of the lockdown has been an increase in domestic violence and abuse. Staff will be as vulnerable to this anyone else is.

The principal control measures for this risk will be for staff:

- To contact relevant domestic violence services direct. Details can be found at: <https://staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk/support-available-for-anyone-affected-by-domestic-abuse/>
- To raise this with your line manager who may be able to agree a plan for addressing this, depending on the situation.

4.4 Staff at risk of contracting COVID-19 whilst travelling to or from the workplace.

Staff who return to the offices to work may be at risk of contracting COVID-19 on their way to or from work. This may be more likely when using public transport. To manage these risks, staff must:

- Avoid public transport if at all possible, driving, walking or cycling to work if you can;
- Avoid car sharing apart from with someone from your household;
- Otherwise follow national guidance on using public transport⁶;
- In particular, where appropriate wear a face covering while travelling;
- Observe social distancing as far as possible while on public transport;
- And wash your hands or use sanitiser when arriving at work.

⁶ See: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>